

# Rental Assistance

## Housing Investments Impacting Health Care Outcomes



The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (the Agency) partners with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to fund rental assistance programs for low-income renters with disabilities.

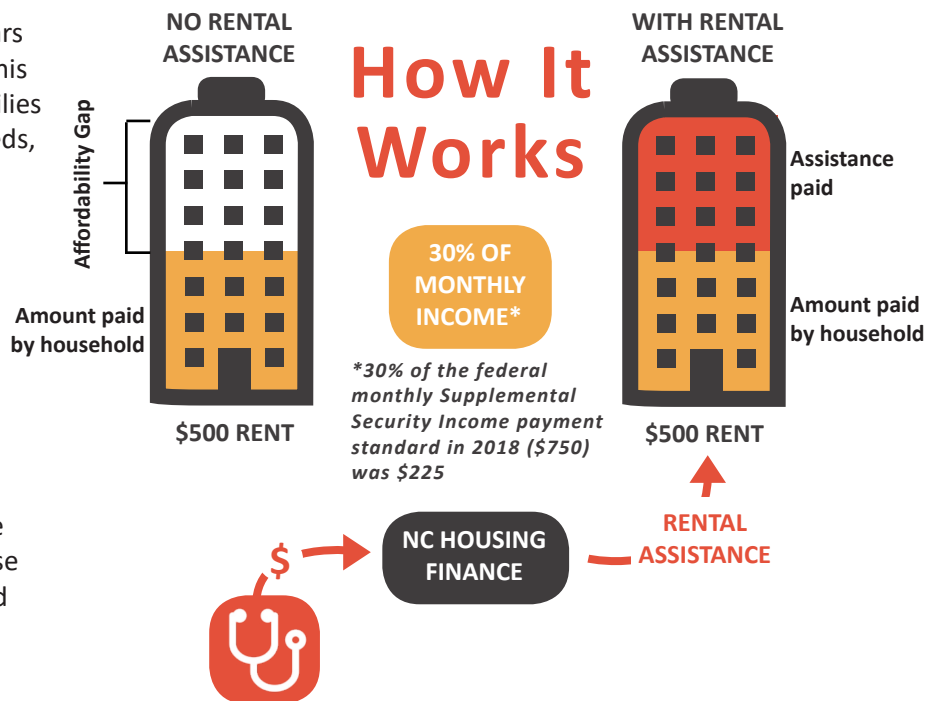
Key Rental Assistance (Key) and the Transitions to Community Living Voucher (TCLV) both pay partial rent to create access to integrated housing with connection to supportive services. Key works in concert with the Targeting Program by paying partial rent on certain “Targeted Units.” TCLV helps people with disabilities move from institutional settings to independent living by paying partial rent on market-rate units. The Agency and DHHS work with local service providers and the state’s network of behavioral health management organizations (LME/MCOs) to implement Key and TCLV. For Key, referral agencies (approved by DHHS) identify potential tenants, determine their eligibility and work with DHHS to refer them to properties with Targeted Units. For TCLV, LME/MCOs connect their clients with the vouchers and help them find units in the private market to rent.



Rental assistance can save health care dollars by creating access to quality apartments. This creates a better living environment for families and leaves more money for other basic needs, which is linked to improved child health, cognitive development and educational outcomes.<sup>1</sup>



Rental assistance keeps housing affordable long-term. Unstable housing can lead to cognitive, behavioral and mental health issues, as well as physical illnesses like asthma.<sup>2</sup> A recent Enterprise survey found 54% of renters postponed medical care due to financial strain. Rental assistance can ease this strain and has been linked to decreased health care costs.<sup>3</sup>



More than 5,600 apartments in 675 properties across the state are set aside as Targeted Units, and Key has helped more than 5,000 households in these units. TCLV has assisted another 1,700 individuals. By investing in the state’s existing program infrastructure, health care partners can target their dollars directly to individuals with the greatest need for stable housing.

**The return on such an investment in North Carolina could be significant: \$1 million invested in rental assistance through Agency programs could provide a year of assistance to an estimated 140 households.**

1 Cohen, R. (2007). *The positive impacts of affordable housing on health: A research summary*. Center for Housing Policy and Enterprise Community Partners. Available at <https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/positive-impacts-affordable-housing-health-research-summary-13889>.

2 Enterprise Community Partners. (2019, April). *Survey: When housing costs undermine health and peace of mind*. Available at <https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/blog/health-survey-renters>.

3 Pfeiffer, D. (2017). *Rental housing assistance and health: Evidence from the Survey of Income and Program Participation*. *Housing Policy Debate*, 28(4): 515-533. doi: 10.1080/10511482.2017.1404480.

